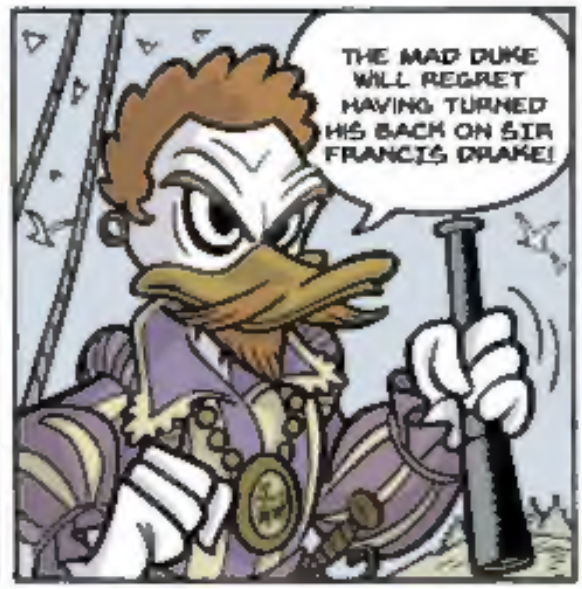
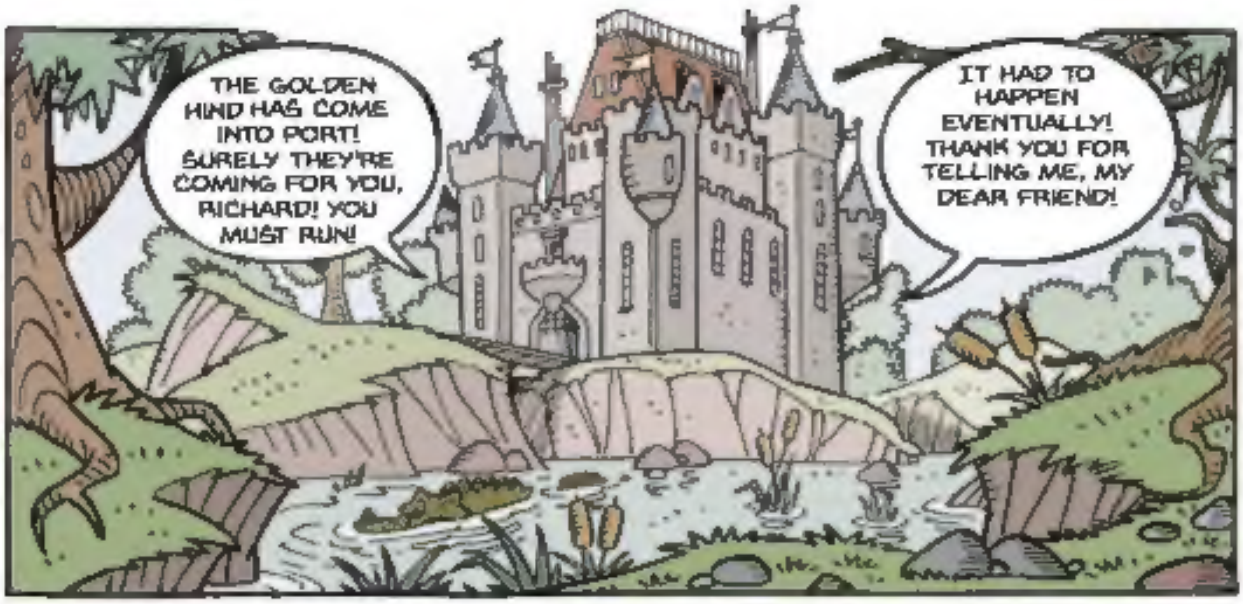
LE STRABILIANTI IMPRESE DI FANTOMIUS -LADRO GENTILUOMO-

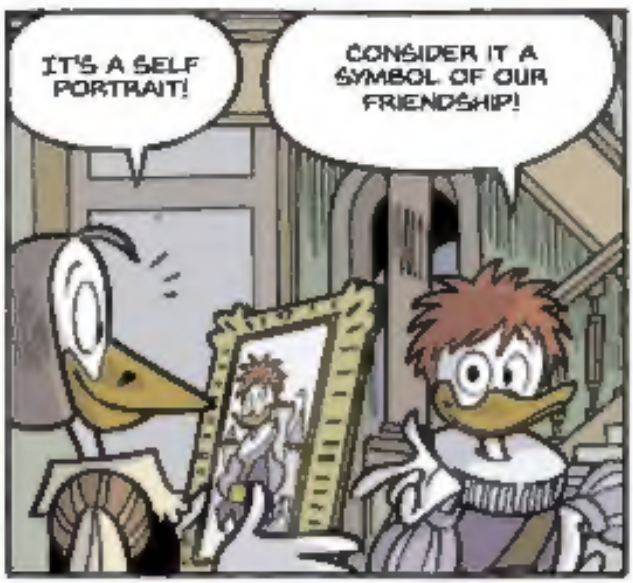


Soggetto, sceneggiatura e disegni di **Marco Gervasio**


THE GOLDEN HIND HAS COME INTO PORT! SURELY THEY'RE COMING FOR YOU, RICHARD! YOU MUST RUN!
IT HAD TO HAPPEN EVENTUALLY! THANK YOU FOR TELLING ME, MY DEAR FRIEND!

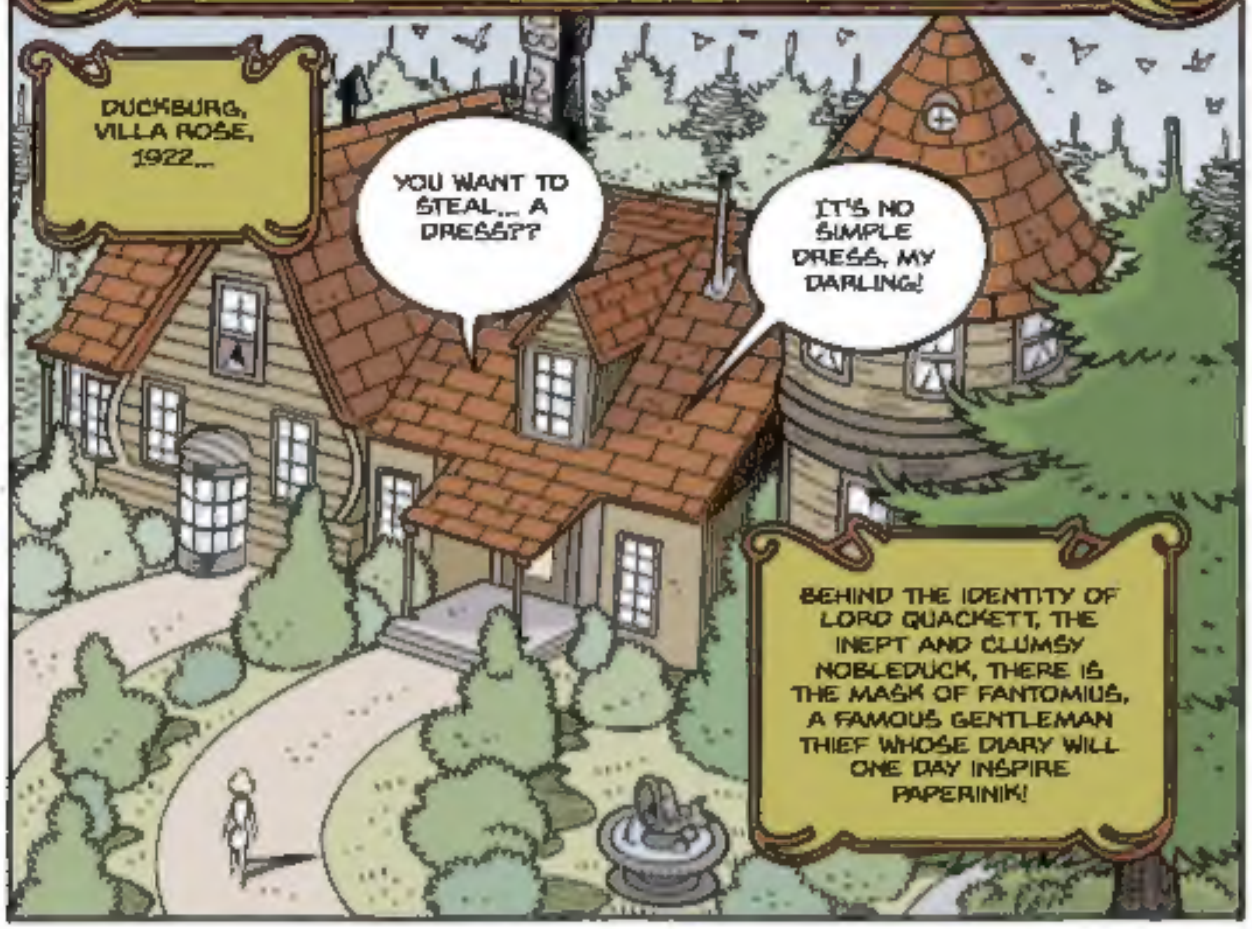
YOU MUST ESCAPE FROM NEW ALBION IMMEDIATELY!
OF COURSE, AND I'LL HEED YOUR WARNING...

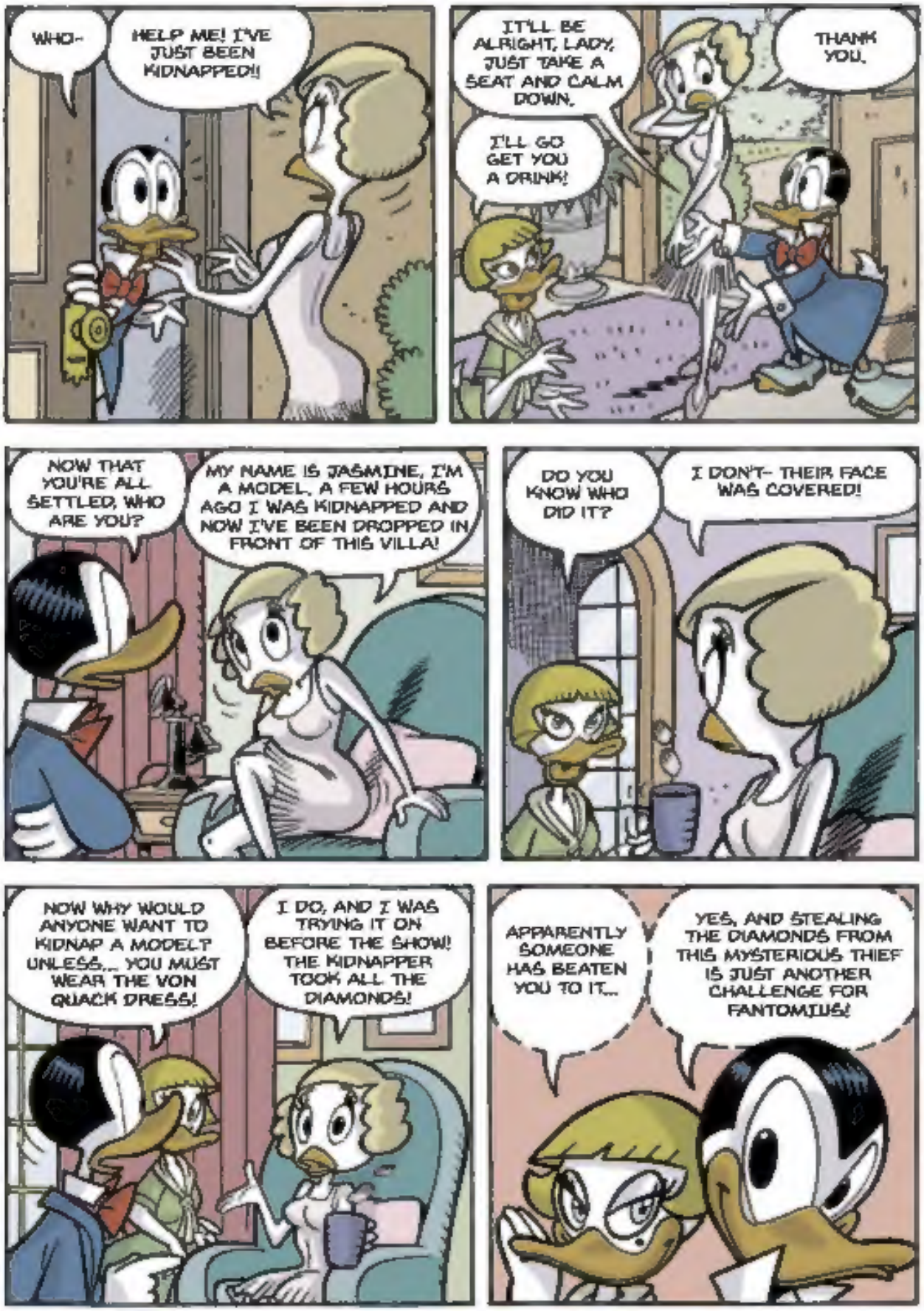
BUT NOT BEFORE WE PAY OUR RESPECTS TO THE WONDERFUL PAINTING I'VE JUST FINISHED!
?

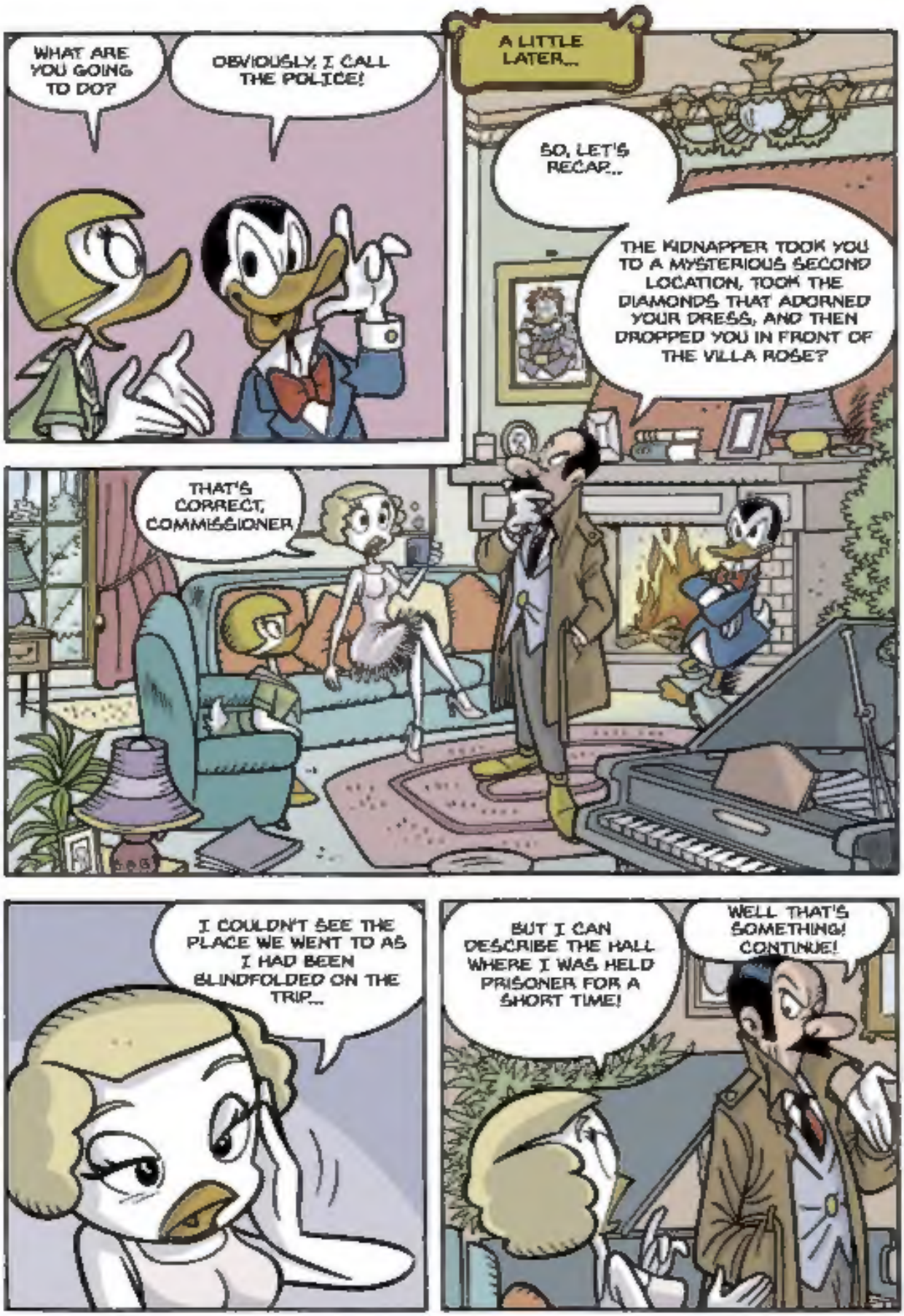

IT'S A SELF PORTRAIT!
CONSIDER IT A SYMBOL OF OUR FRIENDSHIP!

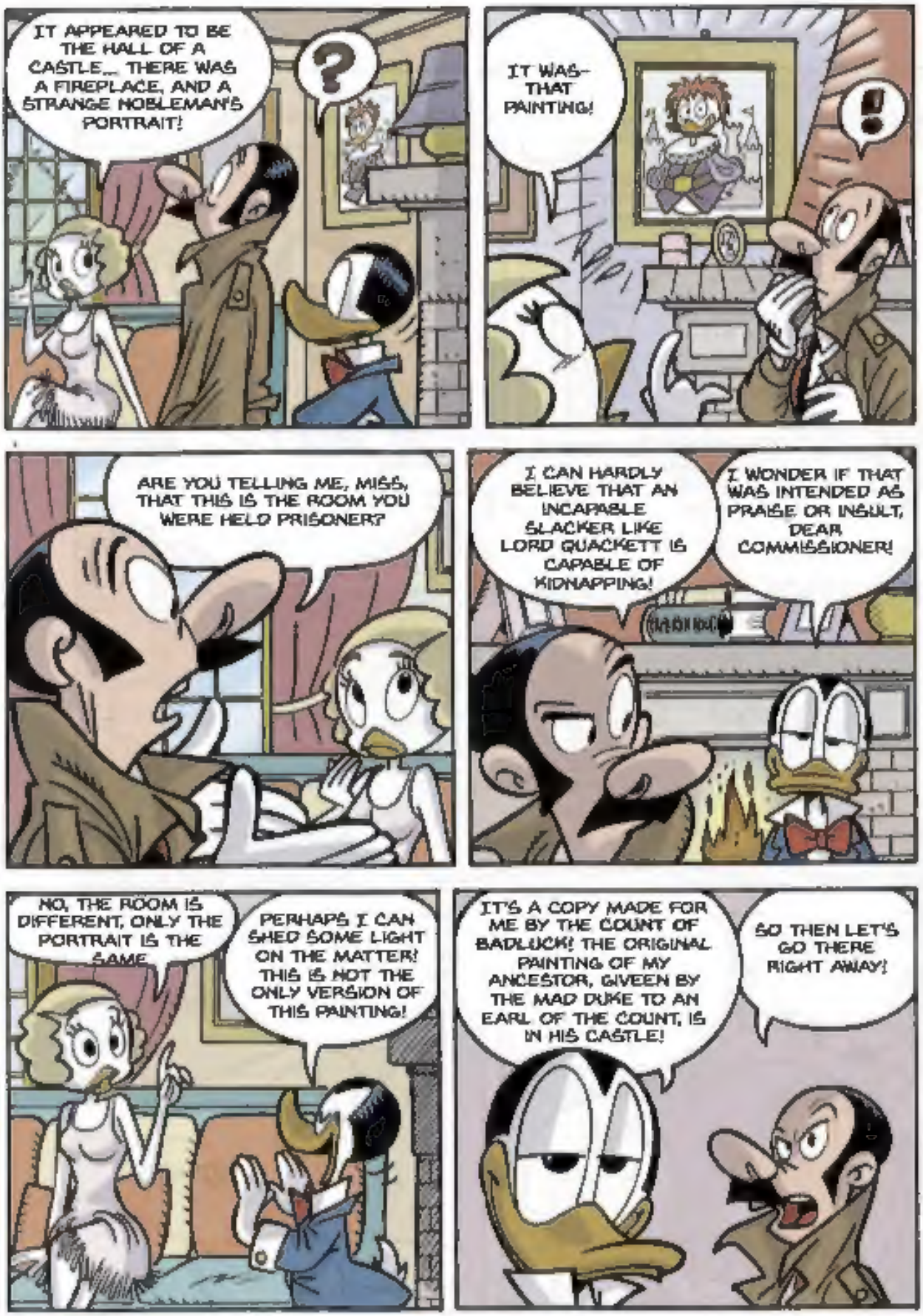
HANG IT UP AT HOME SO YOU'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER ME!
I'LL BE SURE OF IT! NOW HURRY, PLEASE! TIME IS RUNNING OUT!

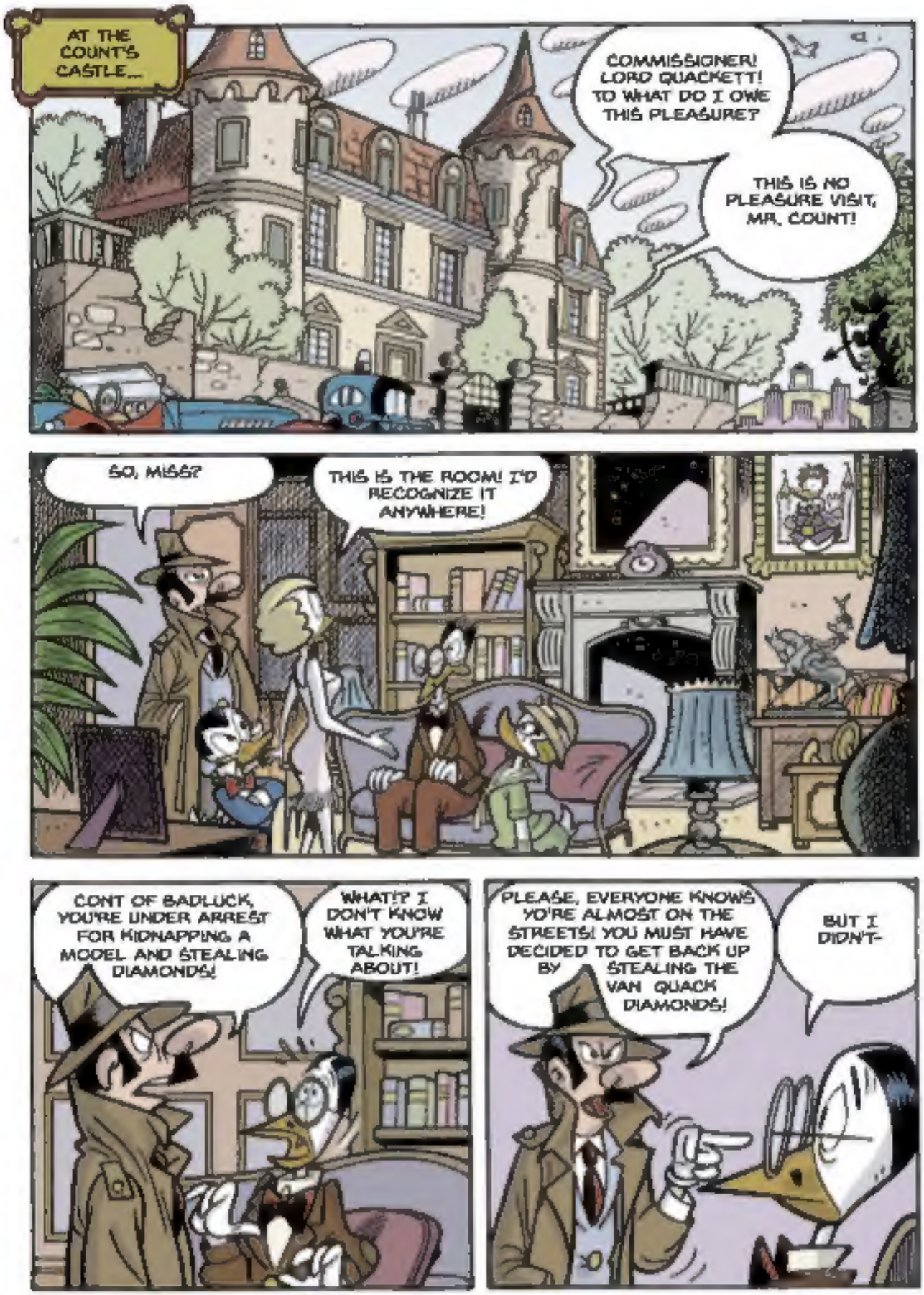
il Tesoro di Francis Drake

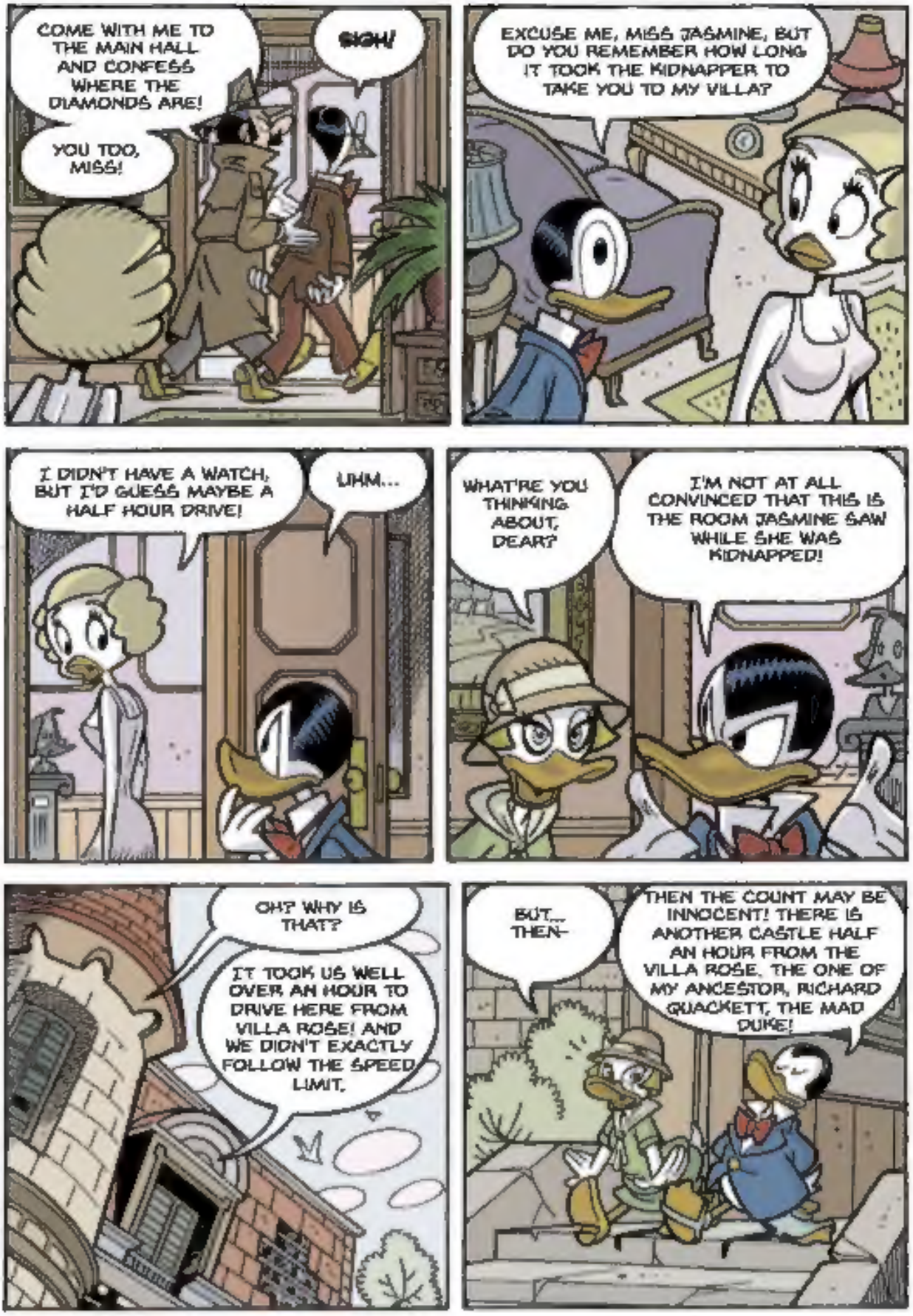

DUCKBURG, VILLA ROSE, 1922...
YOU WANT TO STEAL... A DRESS??
IT'S NO SIMPLE DRESS, MY DARLING!
BEHIND THE IDENTITY OF LORD QUACKETT, THE INEPT AND CLUMSY NOBLEDUCK, THERE IS THE MASK OF FANTOMIUS, A FAMOUS GENTLEMAN THIEF WHOSE DIARY WILL ONE DAY INSPIRE PAPERINIK!


WHO-
HELP ME! I'VE JUST BEEN KIDNAPPED!!
IT'LL BE ALRIGHT, LADY, JUST TAKE A SEAT AND CALM DOWN.
I'LL GO GET YOU A DRINK!
THANK YOU.
NOW THAT YOU'RE ALL SETTLED, WHO ARE YOU?
MY NAME IS JASMINE, I'M A MODEL, A FEW HOURS AGO I WAS KIDNAPPED AND NOW I'VE BEEN DROPPED IN FRONT OF THIS VILLA!
DO YOU KNOW WHO DID IT?
I DON'T- THEIR FACE WAS COVERED!
NOW WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO KIDNAP A MODEL? UNLESS... YOU MUST WEAR THE VON QUACK DRESS!
I DO, AND I WAS TRYING IT ON BEFORE THE SHOW! THE KIDNAPPER TOOK ALL THE DIAMONDS!
APPARENTLY SOMEONE HAS BEATEN YOU TO IT...
YES, AND STEALING THE DIAMONDS FROM THIS MYSTERIOUS THIEF IS JUST ANOTHER CHALLENGE FOR FANTOMIUS!


WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
OBVIOUSLY, I CALL THE POLICE!
A LITTLE LATER...
SO, LET'S RECAP...
THE KIDNAPPER TOOK YOU TO A MYSTERIOUS SECOND LOCATION, TOOK THE DIAMONDS THAT ADORNED YOUR DRESS, AND THEN DROPPED YOU IN FRONT OF THE VILLA ROSE?
THAT'S CORRECT, COMMISSIONER
I COULDN'T SEE THE PLACE WE WENT TO AS I HAD BEEN BLINDFOLDED ON THE TRIP...
BUT I CAN DESCRIBE THE HALL WHERE I WAS HELD PRISONER FOR A SHORT TIME!
WELL THAT'S SOMETHING! CONTINUE!

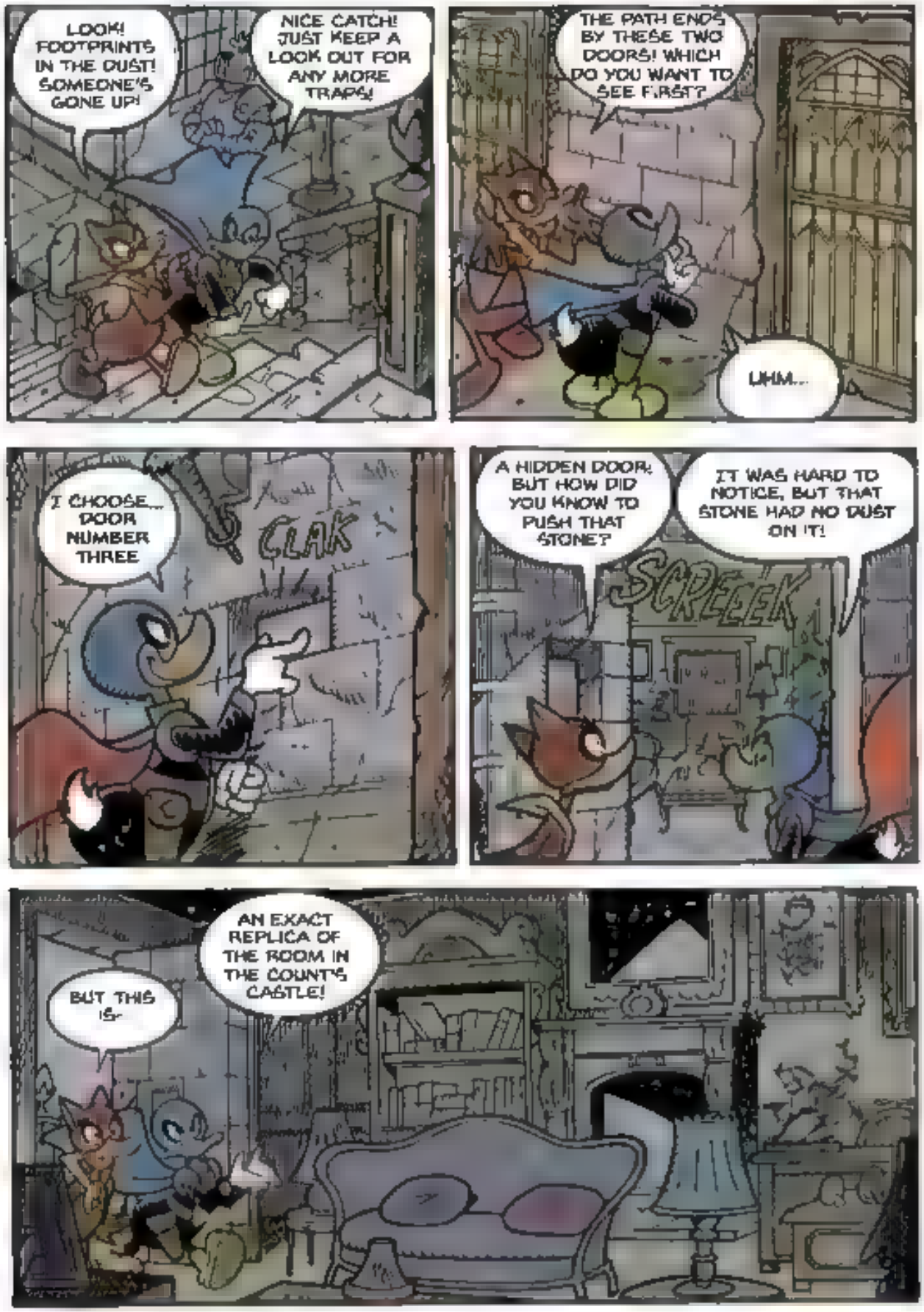

IT APPEARED TO BE THE HALL OF A CASTLE... THERE WAS A FIREPLACE, AND A STRANGE NOBLEMAN'S PORTRAIT!
?
IT WAS- THAT PAINTING!
!
ARE YOU TELLING ME, MISS, THAT THIS IS THE ROOM YOU WERE HELD PRISONER?
I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE THAT AN INCAPABLE SLACKER LIKE LORD QUACKETT IS CAPABLE OF KIDNAPPING!
I WONDER IF THAT WAS INTENDED AS PRAISE OR INSULT, DEAR COMMISSIONER!
NO, THE ROOM IS DIFFERENT, ONLY THE PORTRAIT IS THE SAME
PERHAPS I CAN SHED SOME LIGHT ON THE MATTER! THIS IS NOT THE ONLY VERSION OF THIS PAINTING!
IT'S A COPY MADE FOR ME BY THE COUNT OF BADLUCK! THE ORIGINAL PAINTING OF MY ANCESTOR, GIVEEN BY THE MAD DUKE TO AN EARL OF THE COUNT, IS IN HIS CASTLE!
SO THEN LET'S GO THERE RIGHT AWAY!


AT THE COUNT'S CASTLE...
COMMISSIONER! LORD QUACKETT! TO WHAT DO I OWE THIS PLEASURE?
THIS IS NO PLEASURE VISIT, MR. COUNT!
SO, MISS?
THIS IS THE ROOM! I'D RECOGNIZE IT ANYWHERE!
CONT OF BADLUCK, YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR KIDNAPPING A MODEL AND STEALING DIAMONDS!
WHAT!? I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!
PLEASE, EVERYONE KNOWS YO'RE ALMOST ON THE STREETS! YOU MUST HAVE DECIDED TO GET BACK UP BY STEALING THE VAN QUACK DIAMONDS!
BUT I DIDN'T-

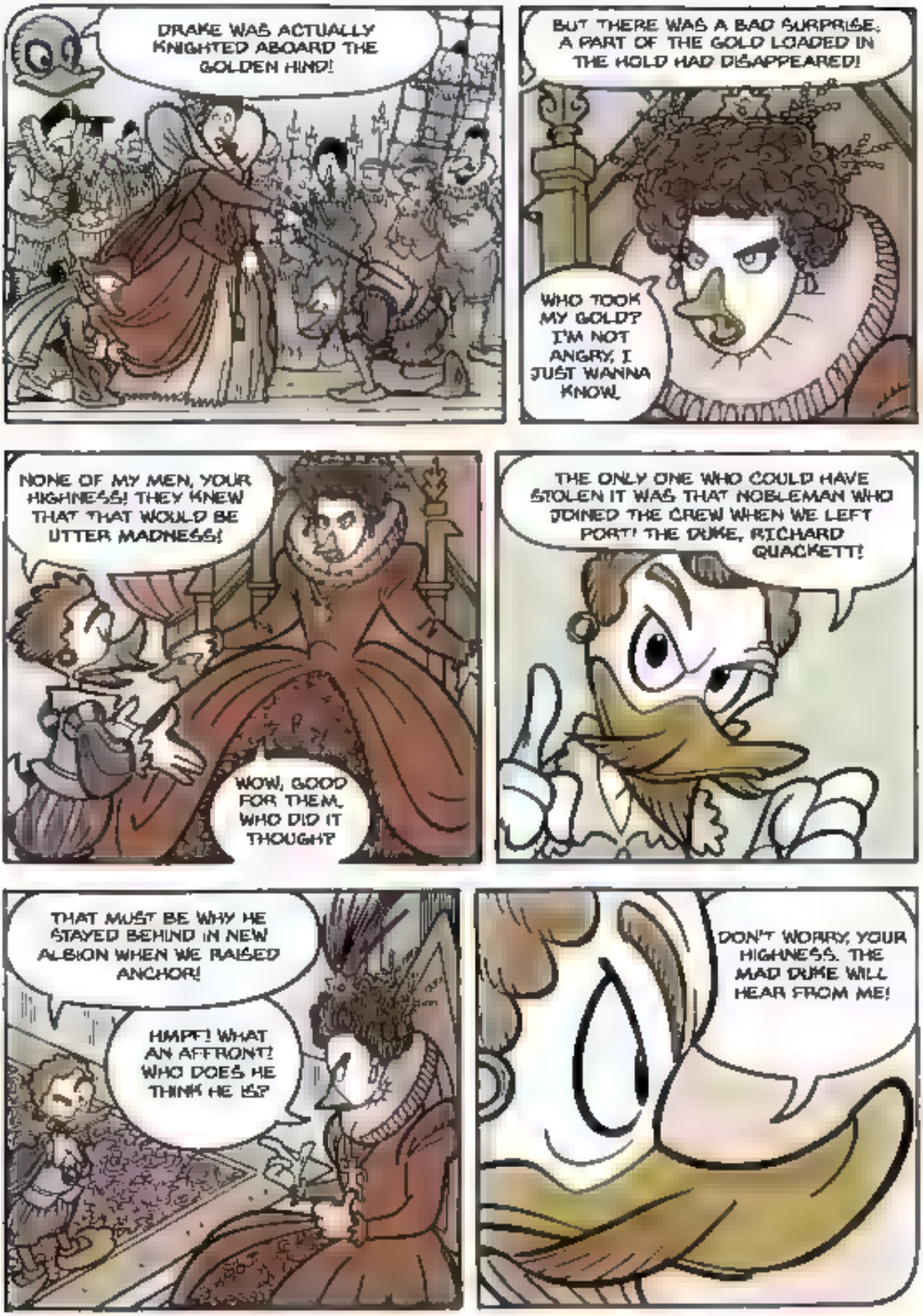

COME WITH ME TO THE MAIN HALL AND CONFESS WHERE THE DIAMONDS ARE!
SIGH!
YOU TOO, MISS!
EXCUSE ME, MISS JASMINE, BUT DO YOU REMEMBER HOW LONG IT TOOK THE KIDNAPPER TO TAKE YOU TO MY VILLA?
I DIDN'T HAVE A WATCH, BUT I'D GUESS MAYBE A HALF HOUR DRIVE!
UHM...
WHAT'RE YOU THINKING ABOUT, DEAR?
I'M NOT AT ALL CONVINCED THAT THIS IS THE ROOM JASMINE SAW WHILE SHE WAS KIDNAPPED!
OH? WHY IS THAT?
IT TOOK US WELL OVER AN HOUR TO DRIVE HERE FROM VILLA ROSE! AND WE DIDN'T EXACTLY FOLLOW THE SPEED LIMIT.
BUT... THEN-
THEN THE COUNT MAY BE INNOCENT! THERE IS ANOTHER CASTLE HALF AN HOUR FROM THE VILLA ROSE, THE ONE OF MY ANCESTOR, RICHARD QUACKETT, THE MAD DUKE!

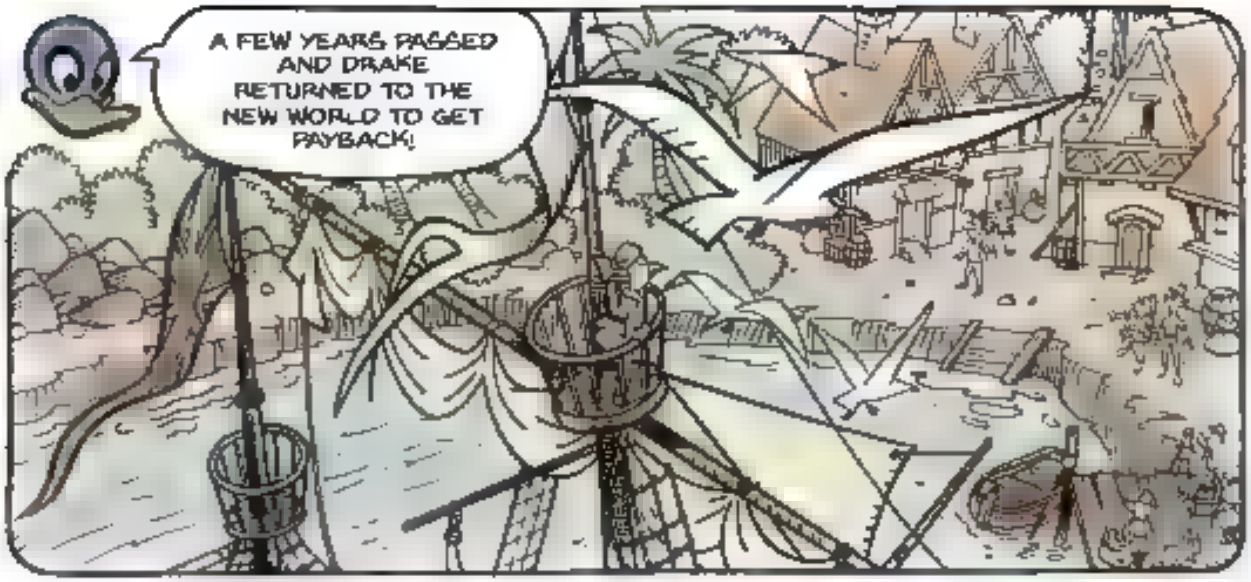
I THINK TONIGHT DOLLY PAPRIKA AND FANTOMIUS WILL BE MAKING A LITTLE INVESTIGATION OF THEIR OWN!
SO...
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT? WE'RE ALMOST THERE!
NOTHING, JUST LAMENTING OVER THE LACK OF WEST COAST JAZZ. I HEAR A DUCK ELLINGTON CAME TO NEW YORK THIS YEAR
WOW THIS BRIDGE SEEMS REALLY UNSTABLE!
THIS CASTLE'S BEEN ABANDONED FOR CENTURIES, DOLLY! THEY SAY ONLY GHOSTS LIVE HERE NOW!
SCRIK CRIK
SCRIK CRIK

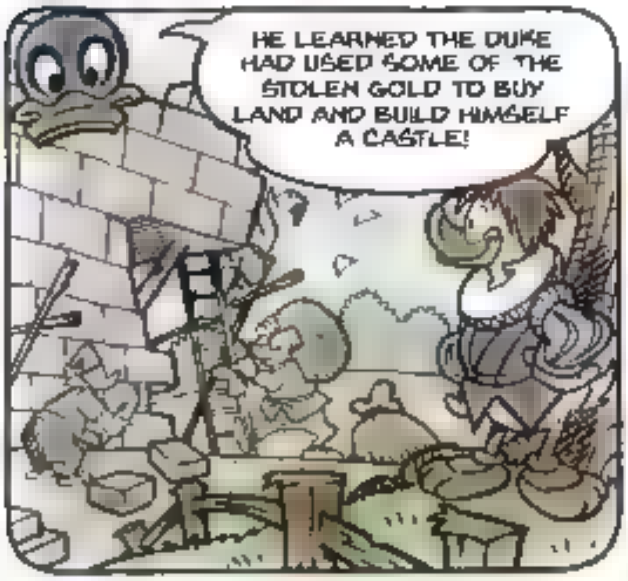
HMM... MAYBE IT'S NOT SO ABANDONED AFTER ALL! LOOK THESE HINGES HAVE BEEN OILED RECENTLY!
AND GHOSTS HAVE NO REASON TO OIL A DOOR!
ALRIGHT, LET'S GO IN... BUT KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED.
HEY! THIS CANDLE WAS LIT RECENTLY!
WAIT...
SCREEEK
ULP!
SLAM
MY BAD!
NO WORRIES! I HAVE THE SPRING BOOTS ON!
BOING


LOOK! FOOTPRINTS IN THE DUST! SOMEONE'S GONE UP!
NICE CATCH! JUST KEEP A LOOK OUT FOR ANY MORE TRAPS!
THE PATH ENDS BY THESE TWO DOORS! WHICH DO YOU WANT TO SEE FIRST?
UHM...
I CHOOSE... DOOR NUMBER THREE
CLAK
A HIDDEN DOOR! BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW TO PUSH THAT STONE?
IT WAS HARD TO NOTICE, BUT THAT STONE HAD NO DUST ON IT!
SCREEEK
AN EXACT REPLICA OF THE ROOM IN THE COUNT'S CASTLE!
BUT THIS IS-

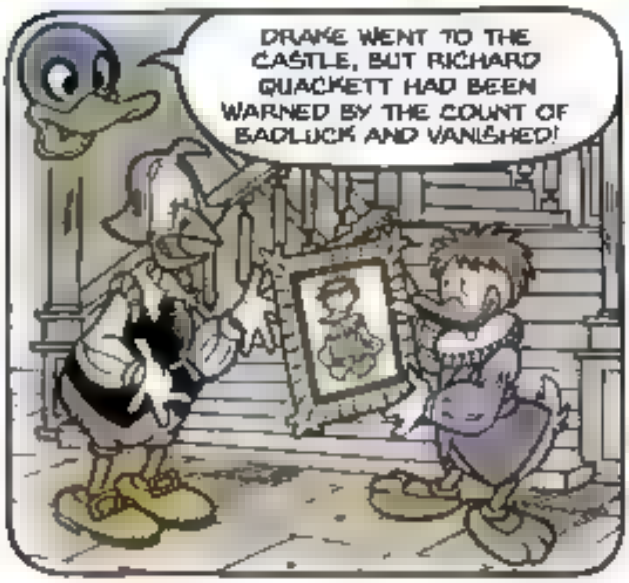
THIS MUST BE WHERE THE MODEL WAS BROUGHT! BUT WHY?
PROBABLY SO SHE'D BELIEVE SHE WAS IN CASTLE OF BADLUCK AND BLAME THE COUNT!
YES, BUT WHY WOULD SOMEONE DO THAT? AND WHO ARE THEY?
NO IDEA! LET'S LOOK AROUND
SHORTLY AFTER...
WELL THERE'S NOTHING OVER THERE, FIND ANYTHING?
I FOUND THIS OLD NOTEBOOK... I THINK IT'S A DIARY!
IT RECOUNTS THE EXPEDITION OF SIR FRANCIS DRAKE ALONG THE AMERICAN COASTS!
Francis Drake
THE PIRATE ACCUMULATED A LARGE LOAD OF SPICES AND TREASURES FROM ALL THE BOATS HE FACED!
WELL YES, THAT'S WHAT PIRATES DO.
BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE!

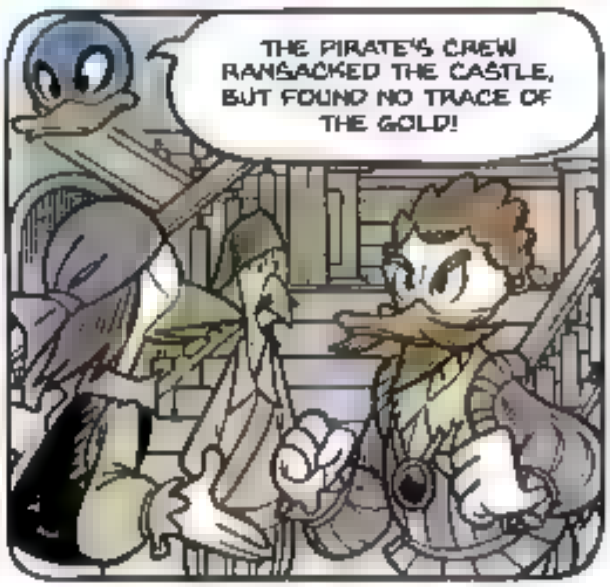

DRAKE WAS ACTUALLY KNIGHTED ABOARD THE GOLDEN HIND!
BUT THERE WAS A BAD SURPRISE. A PART OF THE GOLD LOADED IN THE HOLD HAD DISAPPEARED!
WHO TOOK MY GOLD? I'M NOT ANGRY, I JUST WANNA KNOW.
NONE OF MY MEN, YOUR HIGHNESS! THEY KNEW THAT THAT WOULD BE UTTER MADNESS!
WOW, GOOD FOR THEM, WHO DID IT THOUGH?
THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD HAVE STOLEN IT WAS THAT NOBLEMAN WHO JOINED THE CREW WHEN WE LEFT PORT! THE DUKE, RICHARD QUACKETT!
THAT MUST BE WHY HE STAYED BEHIND IN NEW ALBION WHEN WE RAISED ANCHOR!
HMPF! WHAT AN AFFRONT! WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS?
DON'T WORRY, YOUR HIGHNESS. THE MAD DUKE WILL HEAR FROM ME!

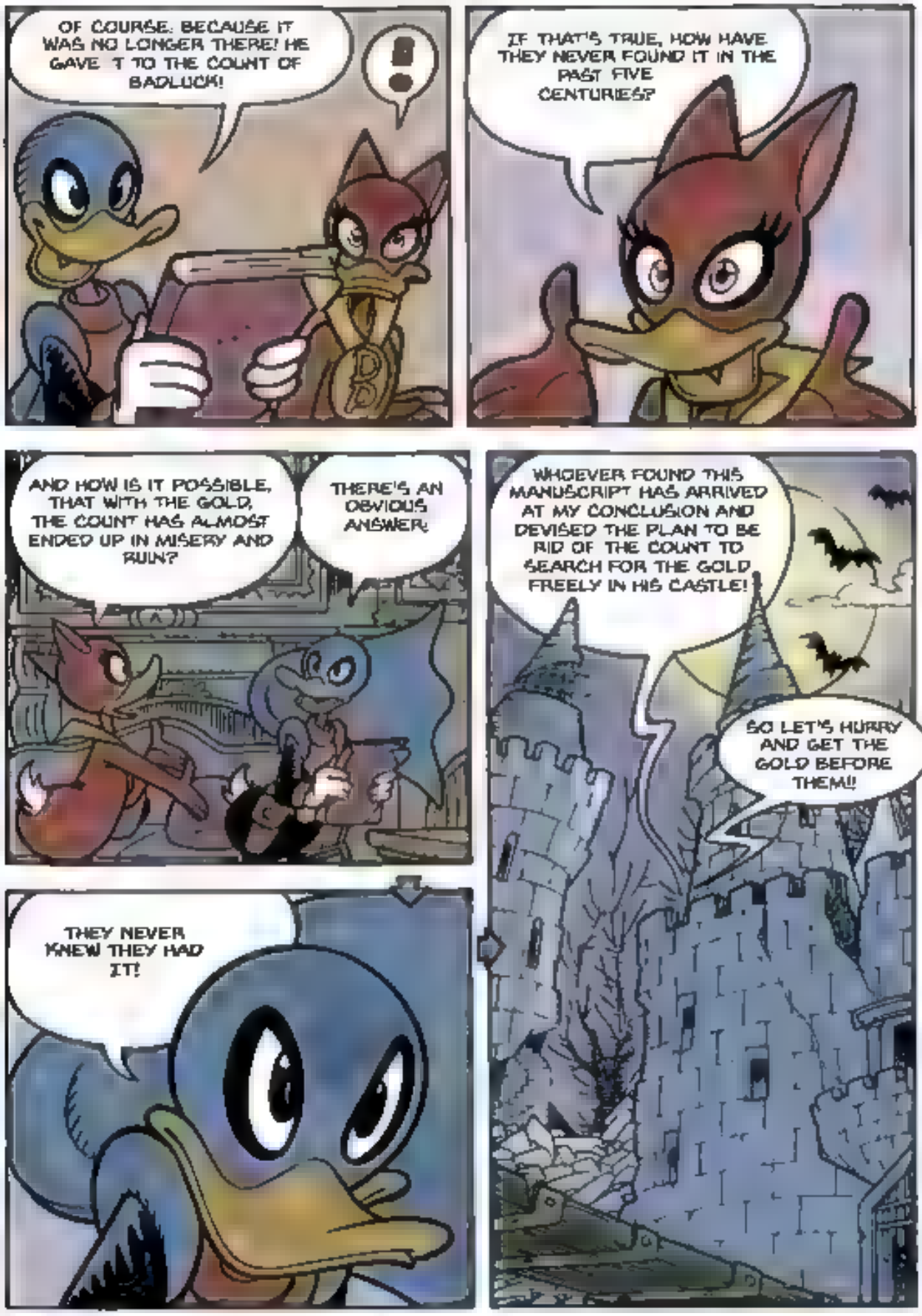

A FEW YEARS PASSED AND DRAKE RETURNED TO THE NEW WORLD TO GET PAYBACK!

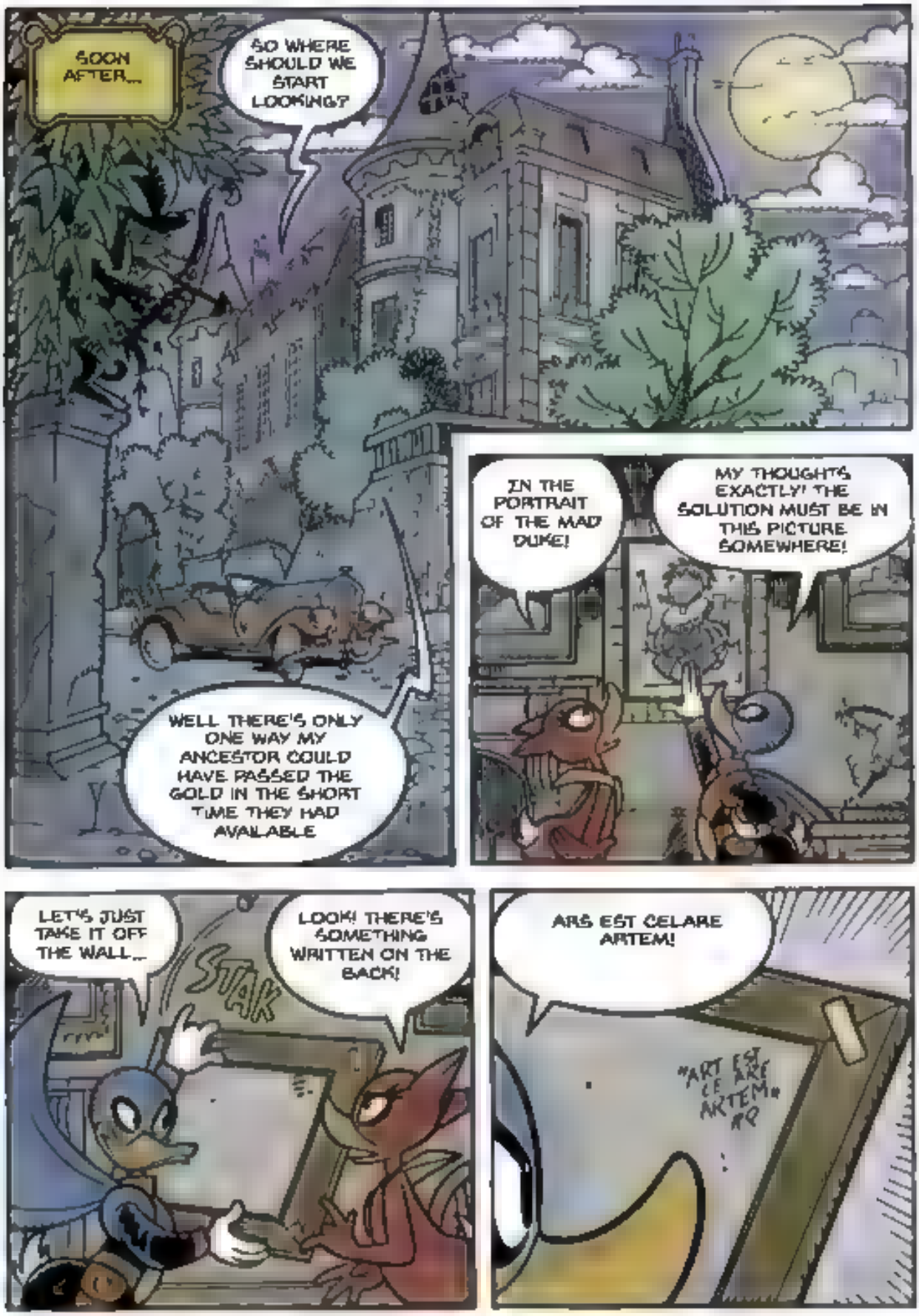

HE LEARNED THE DUKE HAD USED SOME OF THE STOLEN GOLD TO BUY LAND AND BUILD HIMSELF A CASTLE!

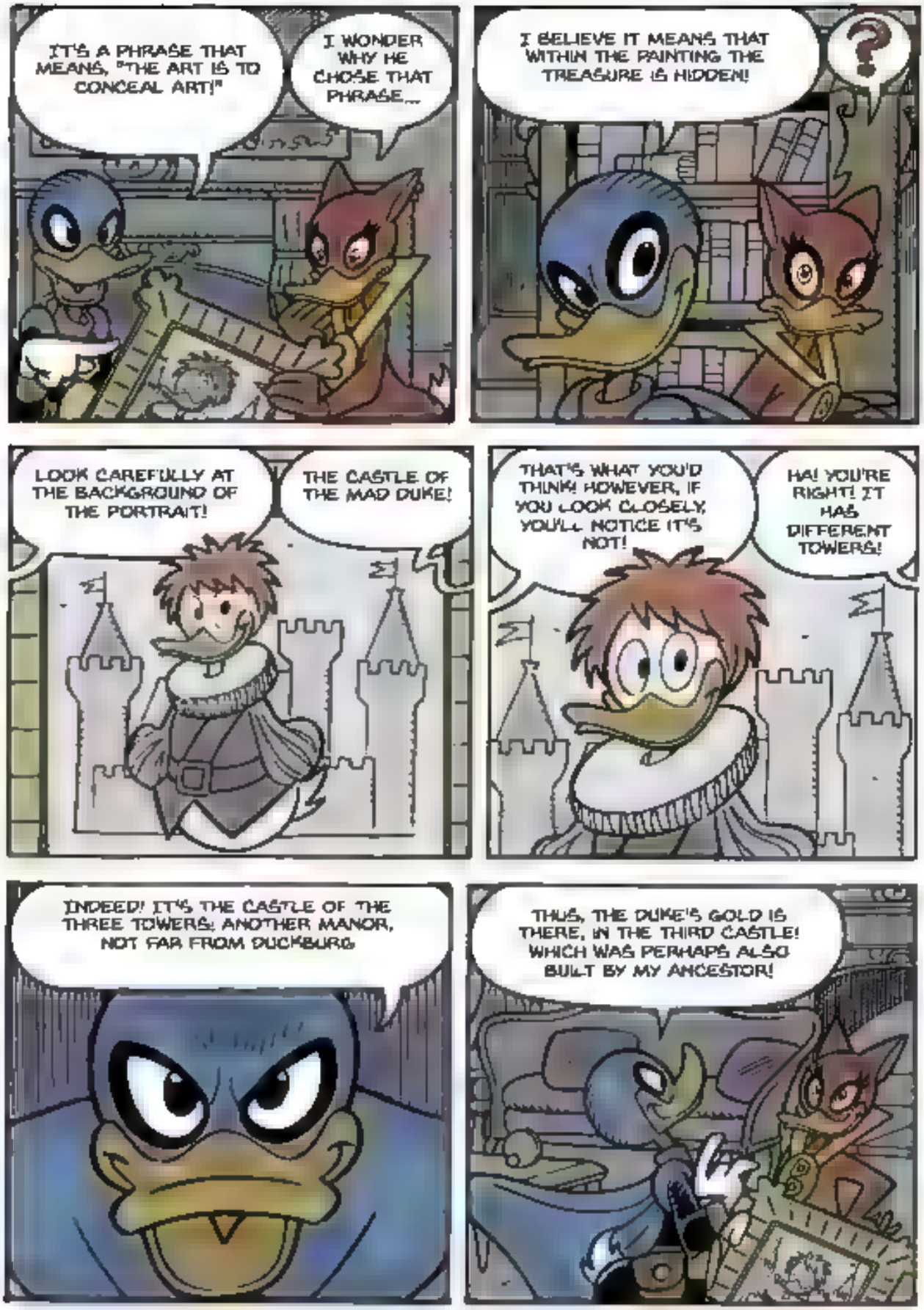
AND HE GAVE A SIGNIFICANT PORTION TO THE POOR IN THE AREA!
I SEE YOU AREN'T THE FIRST GENTLEMAN THIEF IN YOUR LINE!

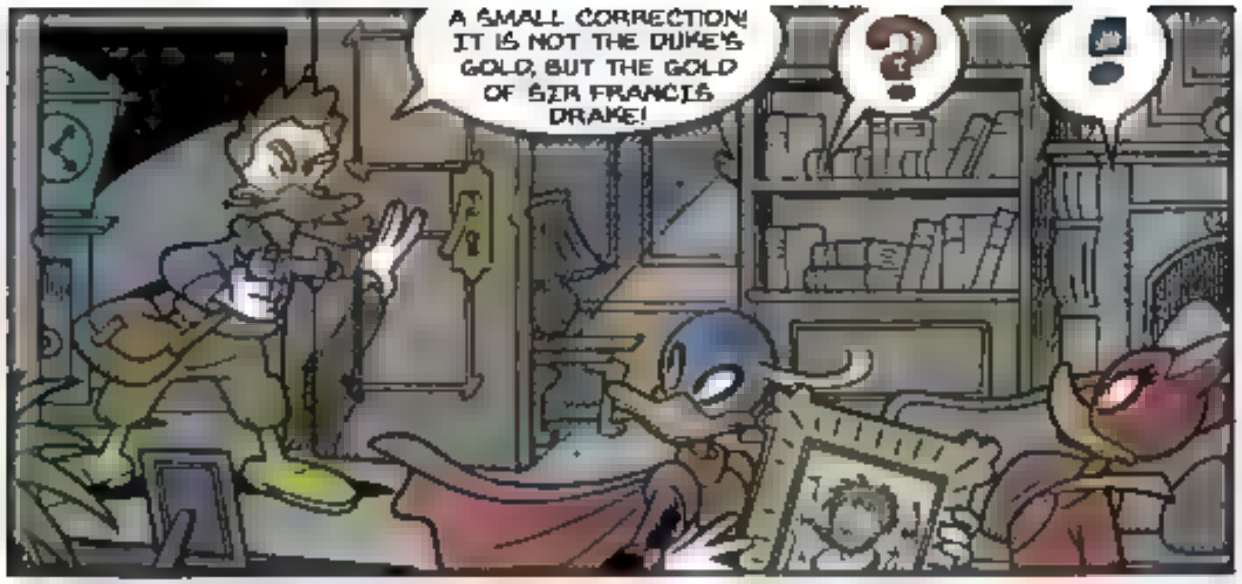

DRAKE WENT TO THE CASTLE, BUT RICHARD QUACKETT HAD BEEN WARNED BY THE COUNT OF BADLUCK AND VANISHED!

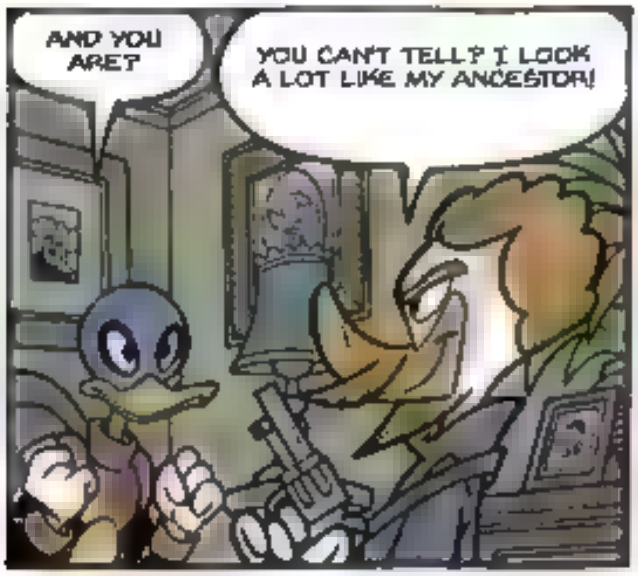

THE PIRATE'S CREW RANSACKED THE CASTLE, BUT FOUND NO TRACE OF THE GOLD!


OF COURSE: BECAUSE IT WAS NO LONGER THERE! HE GAVE IT TO THE COUNT OF BADLUCK!
IF THAT'S TRUE, HOW HAVE THEY NEVER FOUND IT IN THE PAST FIVE CENTURIES?
AND HOW IS IT POSSIBLE, THAT WITH THE GOLD, THE COUNT HAS ALMOST ENDED UP IN MISERY AND RUIN?
THERE'S AN OBVIOUS ANSWER:
WHOEVER FOUND THIS MANUSCRIPT HAS ARRIVED AT MY CONCLUSION AND DEVISED THE PLAN TO BE RID OF THE COUNT TO SEARCH FOR THE GOLD FREELY IN HIS CASTLE!
SO LET'S HURRY AND GET THE GOLD BEFORE THEM!!
THEY NEVER KNEW THEY HAD IT!


SOON AFTER...
SO WHERE SHOULD WE START LOOKING?
WELL THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY MY ANCESTOR COULD HAVE PASSED THE GOLD IN THE SHORT TIME THEY HAD AVAILABLE
IN THE PORTRAIT OF THE MAD DUKE!
MY THOUGHTS EXACTLY! THE SOLUTION MUST BE IN THIS PICTURE SOMEWHERE!
LET'S JUST TAKE IT OFF THE WALL...
STAK
LOOK! THERE'S SOMETHING WRITTEN ON THE BACK!
ARS EST CELARE ARTEM!
"ART EST CE ARE ARTEM" #@

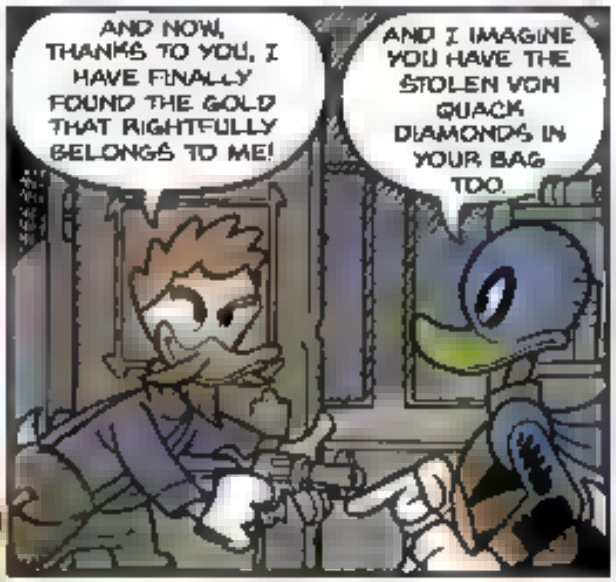

IT'S A PHRASE THAT MEANS, "THE ART IS TO CONCEAL ART!"
I WONDER WHY HE CHOSE THAT PHRASE...
I BELIEVE IT MEANS THAT WITHIN THE PAINTING THE TREASURE IS HIDDEN!
?
LOOK CAREFULLY AT THE BACKGROUND OF THE PORTRAIT!
THE CASTLE OF THE MAD DUKE!
THAT'S WHAT YOU'D THINK! HOWEVER, IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY, YOU'LL NOTICE IT'S NOT!
HA! YOU'RE RIGHT! IT HAS DIFFERENT TOWERS!
INDEED! IT'S THE CASTLE OF THE THREE TOWERS, ANOTHER MANOR, NOT FAR FROM DUCKBURG
THUS, THE DUKE'S GOLD IS THERE, IN THE THIRD CASTLE! WHICH WAS PERHAPS ALSO BUILT BY MY ANCESTOR!

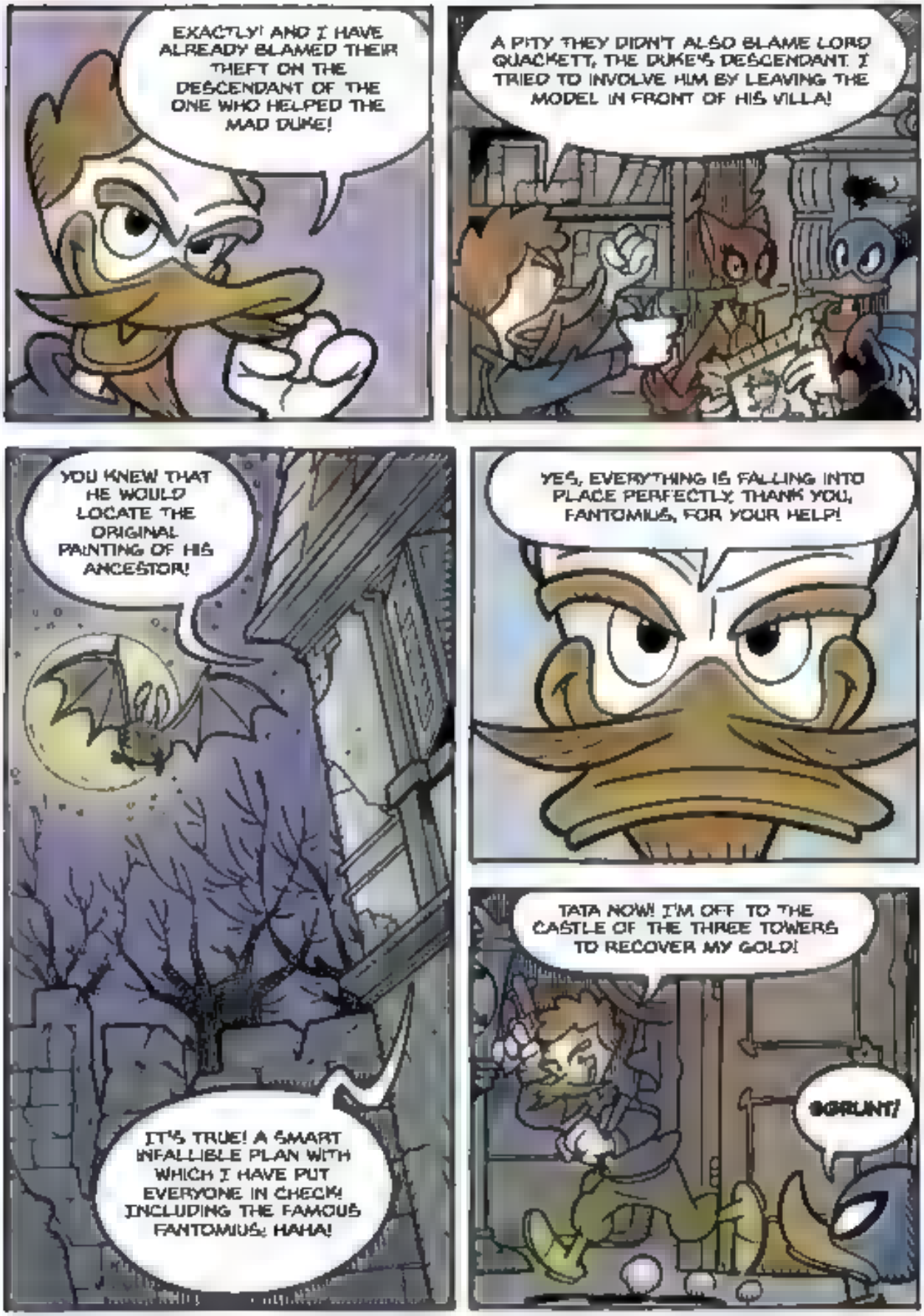

A SMALL CORRECTION! IT IS NOT THE DUKE'S GOLD, BUT THE GOLD OF SIR FRANCIS DRAKE!
?
!

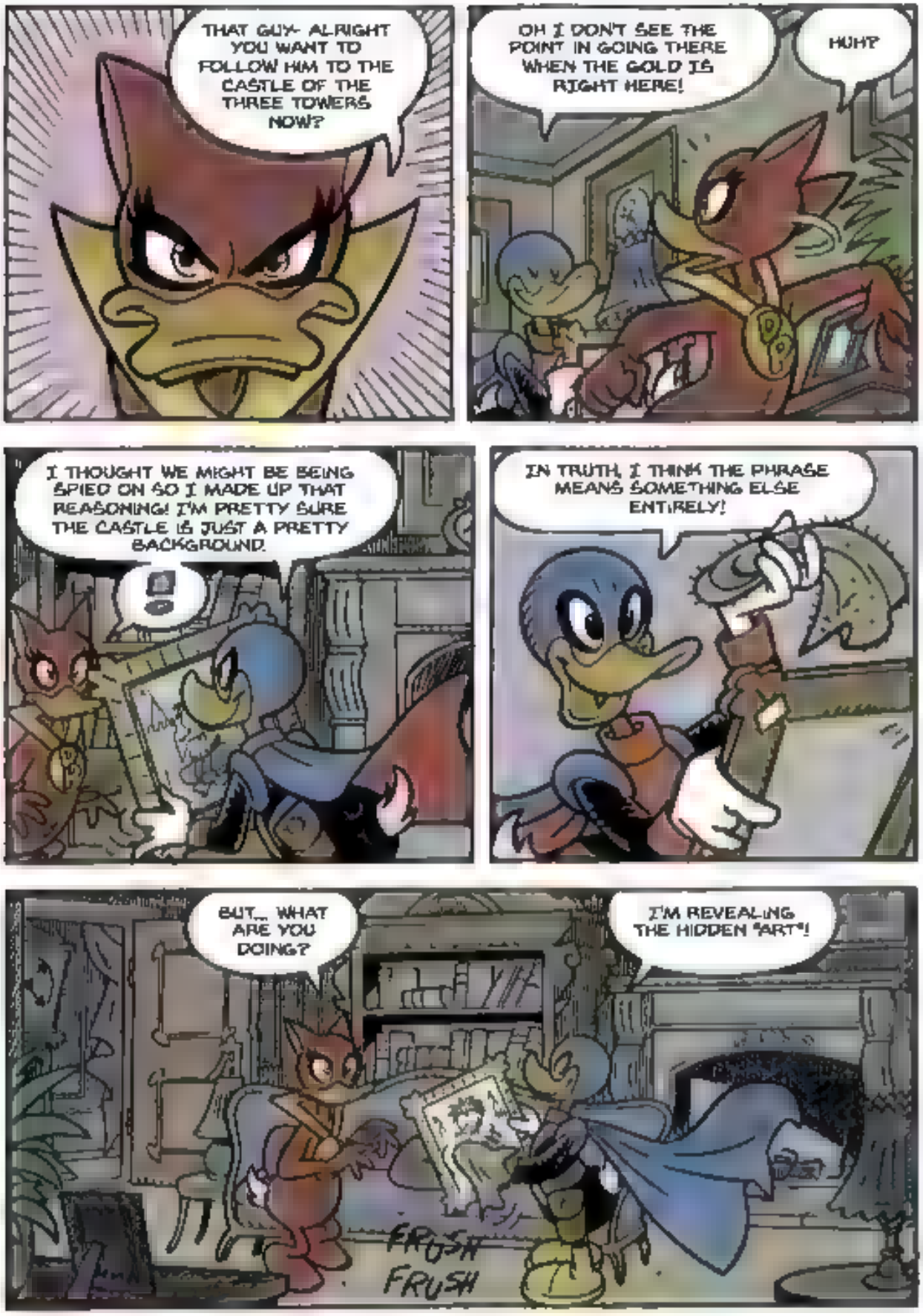

AND YOU ARE?
YOU CAN'T TELL? I LOOK A LOT LIKE MY ANCESTOR!

I AM HOWARD DRAKE, THE LAST DESCENDANT OF THE INFAMOUS SIR FRANCIS DRAKE!

THE QUEEN ORDERED ALL THE ACCOUNTS OF MY ANCESTOR'S JOURNEY TO BE KEPT SECRET* BUT I FOUND HIS DIARY AND UNDERSTOOD EVERYTHING!
*THIS IS A HISTORICAL FACT!

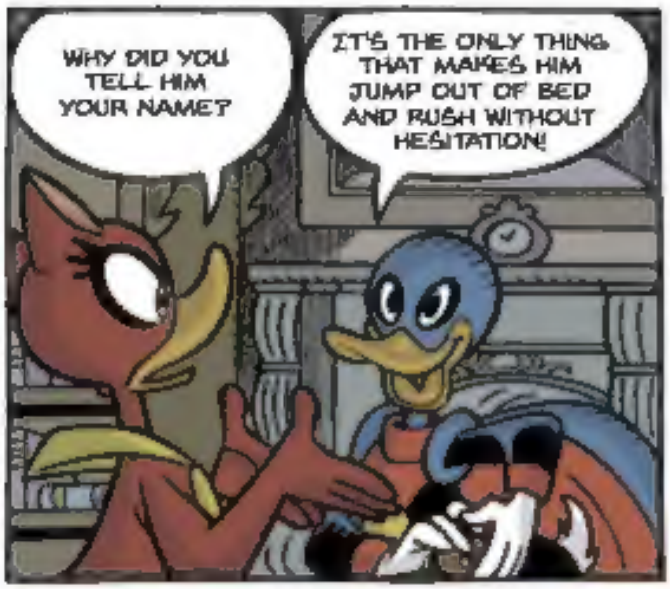

AND NOW, THANKS TO YOU, I HAVE FINALLY FOUND THE GOLD THAT RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO ME!
AND I IMAGINE YOU HAVE THE STOLEN VON QUACK DIAMONDS IN YOUR BAG TOO.


EXACTLY! AND I HAVE ALREADY BLAMED THEIR THEFT ON THE DESCENDANT OF THE ONE WHO HELPED THE MAD DUKE!
A PITY THEY DIDN'T ALSO BLAME LORD QUACKETT, THE DUKE'S DESCENDANT. I TRIED TO INVOLVE HIM BY LEAVING THE MODEL IN FRONT OF HIS VILLA!
YOU KNEW THAT HE WOULD LOCATE THE ORIGINAL PAINTING OF HIS ANCESTOR!
IT'S TRUE! A SMART INFALLIBLE PLAN WITH WHICH I HAVE PUT EVERYONE IN CHECK! INCLUDING THE FAMOUS FANTOMIUS, HAHA!
YES, EVERYTHING IS FALLING INTO PLACE PERFECTLY, THANK YOU, FANTOMIUS, FOR YOUR HELP!
TATA NOW! I'M OFF TO THE CASTLE OF THE THREE TOWERS TO RECOVER MY GOLD!
GRUNT!


THAT GUY- ALRIGHT YOU WANT TO FOLLOW HIM TO THE CASTLE OF THE THREE TOWERS NOW?
OH I DON'T SEE THE POINT IN GOING THERE WHEN THE GOLD IS RIGHT HERE!
HUH?
I THOUGHT WE MIGHT BE BEING SPIED ON SO I MADE UP THAT REASONING! I'M PRETTY SURE THE CASTLE IS JUST A PRETTY BACKGROUND.
IN TRUTH, I THINK THE PHRASE MEANS SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY!
BUT... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I'M REVEALING THE HIDDEN "ART"!
FRUSH FRUSH

WHY- IT'S A GOLDEN CANVAS!
INDEED, IT IS THE HIDDEN GOLD OF LORD QUACKETT!
"THE ART IS TO CONCEAL ART"
AND WHO WOULD KNOW BETTER THAN AN ARTIST OF THEIVERY LIKE YOURSELF!
HOLD ON, I'M GOING TO CALL THE COMMISSIONER!
CALLING THE POLICE TWICE IN ONE DAY? SINCE WHEN DID YOU FOLLOW THE RULES?
SINCE THEY WERE MINE!
DRIIIN-DRIIIN-DRIIIN
UH?

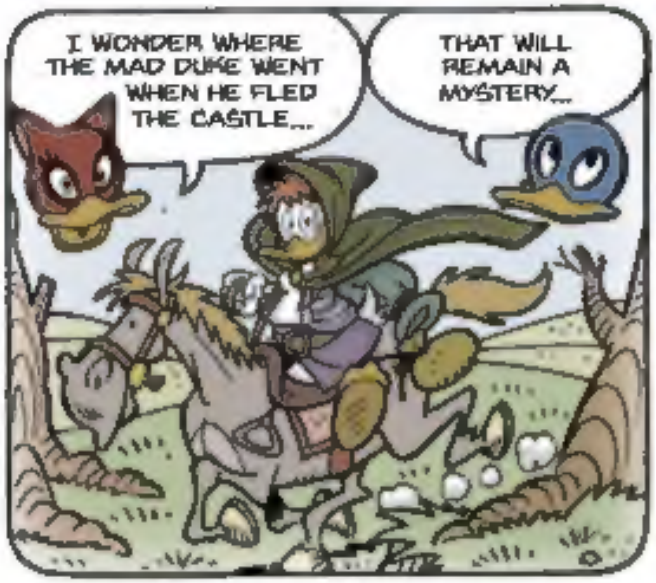
H-HELLO?
THE COUNT OF BADLUCK IS INNOCENT!
HUH? WHO IS THIS?
A FRIEND, WHO WARNS YOU THAT AT THE CASTLE OF THE THREE TOWERS YOU WILL FIND THE TRUE DIAMOND THIEF!
WHO IS IT THIS TIME?
AN ANONYMOUS CALLER...
THEN JUST HANG UP AND GO BACK TO SLEEP!
YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME! I'M NOT GOING TO FALL FOR...
IT'S FANTOMIUS!
ZOOOW
MY MOTHER IS RIGHT WHEN SHE SAYS MY WORST FAULT IS MY HUSBAND.


WHY DID YOU TELL HIM YOUR NAME?
IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT MAKES HIM JUMP OUT OF BED AND RUSH WITHOUT HESITATION!

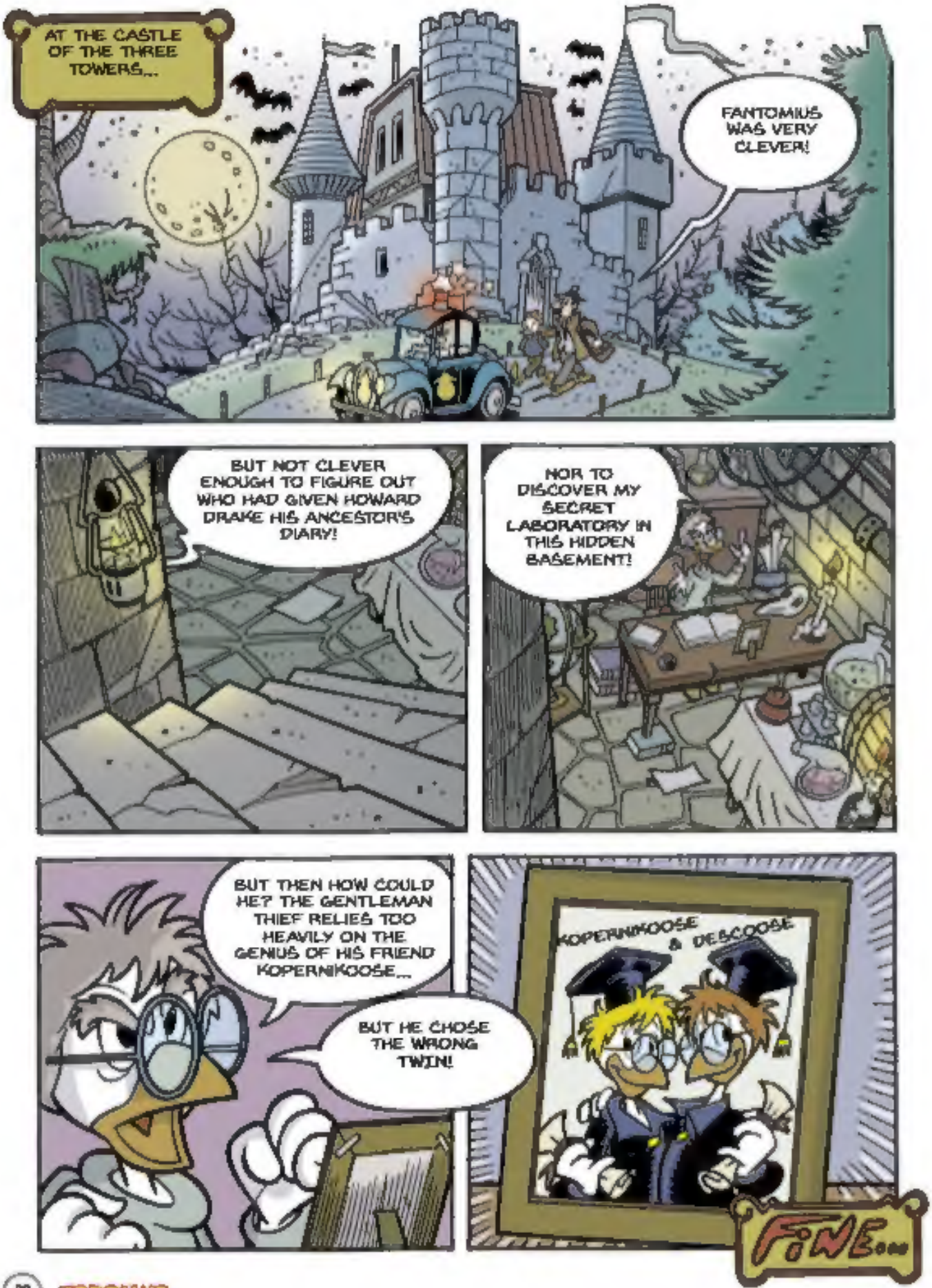
SO HE WOULD FIND HOWARD DRAKE AND FREE THE COUNT!

AND HE'LL HAVE A NICE SURPRISE WHEN HE RETURNS TO HIS CASTLE TO FIND A GOOD PART OF THE GOLD WE'LL LEAVE FOR HIM!
A GENEROUS ACT, LEAVING HIM SOMETHING TO GET BACK ON HIS FEET!

BECAUSE IF RICHARD QUACKETT WAS THE FIRST GENTLEMAN THIEF, JOHN QUACKETT IS THE WORTHY SUCCESSOR!


I WONDER WHERE THE MAD DUKE WENT WHEN HE FLED THE CASTLE...
THAT WILL REMAIN A MYSTERY...

BUT I CAN'T WAIT TO TELL THIS STORY TO KOPERNIKOOSE!


AT THE CASTLE OF THE THREE TOWERS...
FANTOMIUS WAS VERY CLEVER!
BUT NOT CLEVER ENOUGH TO FIGURE OUT WHO HAD GIVEN HOWARD DRAKE HIS ANCESTOR'S DIARY!
NOR TO DISCOVER MY SECRET LABORATORY IN THIS HIDDEN BASEMENT!
BUT THEN HOW COULD HE? THE GENTLEMAN THIEF RELIES TOO HEAVILY ON THE GENIUS OF HIS FRIEND KOPERNIKOOSE...
BUT HE CHOSE THE WRONG TWIN!
KOPERNIKOOSE & DESCOOSE
FINE...